

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
NORTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

IN RE: FACEBOOK, INC. CONSUMER
PRIVACY USER PROFILE LITIGATION

MDL No. 2843

Case Nos. 18-md-02843-VC, 18-cv-05350-
VC, 18-cv-05357-JSW

VELMA SERINA RANKINS, ET AL.,
Plaintiffs,

v.

FACEBOOK, INC.,
Defendant.

**ORDER TO RELATE CASES (*RANKINS*
AND HWANG)**

Re: Dkt. Nos. 135 (18-md-02483-VC)
15, 16 (18-cv-05350-VC)

SUSAN HWANG,
Plaintiff,

v.

FACEBOOK, INC.,
Defendant.

Co-Lead Counsels' motion to relate the following cases to the MDL proceeding is granted: *Rankins v. Facebook, Inc.*, No. 3:18-cv-05350-VC (N.D. Cal.), and *Hwang v. Facebook, Inc.*, No. 3:18-cv-05357-JSW (N.D. Cal.).

The recently filed consolidated complaint makes clear that this multidistrict litigation action is about Facebook's mishandling of user information in its arrangements with third parties, generally. Rankins and Hwang protest that their cases concern Facebook's data-sharing arrangements with dozens of device makers, while the MDL action was originally formed and transferred to this Court to address Facebook's arrangements with third-party applications. That

may be true, and there may be some factual and/or legal differences in the various data-sharing arrangements Facebook maintained with different third parties. But ultimately, these differences do not overcome the arguments in favor of relating the cases.

First, relating these cases will serve the “convenience of parties and witnesses and will promote the just and efficient conduct of such actions.” 28 U.S.C. § 1407. Keeping the cases separate would undoubtedly lead to duplication of discovery and briefing, while relating the cases conserves the resources of the parties, their counsel, and this Court. This is especially true given that Co-Lead Counsel has now included allegations against Facebook for its mishandling of user data in its arrangements with device makers – the same allegations Rankins and Hwang bring in their cases. It is therefore consistent with the JPML’s decision to consolidate the thirty originally-filed cases to relate these new cases to the MDL proceeding.

The standards for relating cases under Local Rule 3-12 are also easily met here. Even before Co-Lead counsel filed its consolidated complaint, “[t]he actions concerne[d] substantially the same parties, property, transaction or event”: Facebook’s handling of user data with third parties. And again, it would be “unduly burdensome” both for the parties and the Court to litigate these cases separately.

Therefore, *Rankins* and *Hwang* are hereby related to this action. The outstanding motions in *Rankins* – to relate *Rankins* and *Hwang* to each other (Dkt. No. 15) and to appoint lead plaintiff and lead counsel (Dkt. No. 16) – are denied as moot.

IT IS SO ORDERED.

Dated: October 9, 2018



VINCE CHHABRIA
United States District Judge